

## Correspondence Relating to the Withdrawal of the Ross Rifle from the Canadian Army Corps.

[44]

OTTAWA, March 30, 1916.

PERLEY, Dominion,  
London.

We have ordered \* \* \* Ross Rifles of which \* \* \* have been delivered, and delivery of balance will not be completed before \* \* \* . We are considering giving an order for an additional \* \* \* but before deciding we desire to obtain any available information and advice from British Government. It is said that they have an order for \* \* \* rifles placed with an organization controlled by \* \* \* at \* \* \* . \* \* \* visited these works and was greatly impressed with progress made. Possibly these rifles would cover our requirements if war should continue for more than a year.

BORDEN.

LONDON, April 26, 1916.

PRIME MINISTER,  
Ottawa.

Your cable 30th ultimo. Minister Munitions presumes firm referred to is \* \* \* with whom Imperial Government have contract for \* \* \* rifles. Deliveries not yet commenced and probability is contract will not be completed by \* \* \* . Minister adds there will be no surplus from British orders other than that already allotted \* \* \* . Regrets therefore not in position to allocate from British orders any rifles to Canadian Government. Desirable not place contract with \* \* \* in view work for Imperial Government.

DOMINION.

LONDON, May 12, 1916.

GENERAL HUGHES,  
Ottawa.

Serious situation has arisen regarding Ross rifle \* \* \* . I request that you will show this telegram to Prime Minister.

AITKEN.

OTTAWA, May 15, 1916.

MAX AITKEN,  
London.

Have consulted with General Hughes and we are prepared to leave matter to judgment of Commander in Chief after he has had all necessary tests of both rifles under such conditions as are experienced at front. Men making tests should be of like experience. \* \* \* It is only arm we are equipped to produce in Canada at present and we believe it effective if properly used. Minister informs me that reports just received of recent official tests in England thoroughly demonstrate efficiency of our rifle.

BORDEN.



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*From the Governor General to the Secretary of State for the Colonies.*

OTTAWA, June 5, 1916.

*Secret.* Following from Prime Minister for Sir William Robertson. *Begins.* By reason of rumoured dissatisfaction with Ross rifle, I held consultation with General Hughes on 15th May, and sent unofficial message to Commander in Chief that we were prepared to leave matter to his judgment after making all necessary tests of both rifles under such conditions as are experienced at the front. We suggested that men making tests should be of equal experience. Ross rifle is only arm we are equipped to produce in Canada at present, and we believe it efficient if properly used, but are content to abide by judgment of Commander in Chief after thorough investigation and adequate tests. We realize absolute necessity of two conditions: first, that men shall be armed with thoroughly efficient rifle; second, that their confidence in such rifle shall be unshaken. Please let me have your judgment as to proper course to pursue.

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OTTAWA, June 5, 1916.

PERLEY, Dominion,  
London.

*Confidential.* Please ask Colonial Secretary to show you my secret cable to-day for Chief General Staff respecting Ross rifle, and confer with Aitken to whom you may disclose terms of that message.

BORDEN.

OTTAWA, Ont., June 5, 1916.

PERLEY, Dominion,  
London.

*Secret.* Please ascertain whether British Government have finally and definitely decided on new rifle, or whether they propose before final action to study lessons obtained in present war. If new type of rifle has been finally adopted we are prepared after suitable investigation to adopt it if found satisfactory, so that our rifle in future will be of same type as British. In that case British order for Ross rifle might be cancelled and new order for one hundred thousand rifles new type given instead. Cost of machines and gauges for new type of rifle would approximate five hundred thousand dollars, and this cost might be equally divided between two Governments. Am making this suggestion because of continual criticism of Ross rifle which undoubtedly creates lack of confidence. No rifle, however efficient, is useful unless it commands thorough confidence of men.

BORDEN.

LONDON, June 8, 1916.

PRIME MINISTER,  
Ottawa.

\* \* \* War office considers except trajectory the new Lee-Enfield now being made in United States is as good as any weapon that could be made with present experience and in present war apparently high trajectory no particular disadvantage. Lessons



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obtained in present war have evidently not brought any new experience so far as rifles are concerned. Not considered possible say definitely what rifle will be finally adopted by British Government after war. Hardly to be expected that War Office would, under present circumstances, definitely commit themselves regarding their future service rifle. Master General Ordnance considers rifle now being made for them in United States exceedingly good weapon and would be glad see you use same pattern. Question of money arrangements would have to be taken up officially, but personally should consider that of minor importance.

PERLEY.

LONDON, June 8, 1916.

PRIME MINISTER,  
Ottawa.

*Confidential.* Have shown and discussed with Aitken your secret cable to Chief General Staff. Question will now doubtless be settled by him. Have seen him personally to-day and impressed strongly as possible upon him your views regarding necessity thorough test and also that Canadian Government would need official documents giving full facts and statements which could be made public if thought desirable. Also impressed upon him that Ross rifle is only one which Canada can produce at present, and that if our troops are re-armed at front it naturally would raise question whether Canada should continue manufacturing Ross rifle, and if not some alternative feasible plan would have to be suggested. Showed him copy your cable 5th regarding new type rifle, which I answered this morning. Whole question will doubtless be thoroughly considered within next few days.

PERLEY.

*Secret.*

*Paraphrase of cypher telegram from Mr. Bonar Law to the Governor General.*

LONDON, June 10, 1916.

The following is from Chief of the Imperial General Staff.

*Begins*,—I am much obliged for your telegram 6th June. It has been referred to Sir Douglas Haig, and his reply is awaited before any opinion can be given. *Ends.*

BONAR LAW.

OTTAWA, ONT., June 24, 1916.

PERLEY, Dominion,  
London.

*Most confidential, Secret.* We have had under consideration since January last an order for one hundred thousand additional Ross rifles, none of which can be delivered before April, 1917. If we decide to order the additional one hundred thousand, company requires nearly a year's notice before commencement of delivery in order to secure necessary material of various kinds, for which there is great demand at present. Several months ago the Master General of Ordnance strongly recommended immediate action but we have delayed by reason of doubts raised as to efficiency of rifle. Time has



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now arrived when immediate decision should be made. To this end it is important that we should have a definite, reliable, and thorough report upon the merits of rifle. If it is so defective as to forbid its use at the front, or if confidence in its efficiency has been undermined in our troops, it would be a waste of public money to give further orders. Please consult Aitken, with whom I have had much correspondence on this subject, and advise me whether any such report as above mentioned exists. If not, it should be made immediately for our guidance.

BORDEN.

LONDON, July 5, 1916.

PRIME MINISTER,  
Ottawa.

Your cable 24th ultimo. Have communication from War Office covering letters recently received from Commander in Chief armies in France who reports efficiency Ross rifle thoroughly tested by actual fighting in field, that he has again consulted General Officer Commanding Second Army in case fresh points have come to light during recent heavy fighting by Canadians near Ypres. Latter states his experience working Ross rifle during last fight has only confirmed his opinion that Canadians in Third Division have lost confidence in their rifle, and he recommends that rifles this division be exchanged. Sir Douglas Haig remarks that although reports from Second Division not to same effect he is of opinion Lee-Enfield rifle should be issued to all three divisions Canadian Corps. Army Council agree with this opinion and have approved his proposal to exchange rifles Second and Third Divisions for Lee-Enfield pattern, and steps will be taken forthwith effect exchange. Army Council hope be able utilize Ross rifles released from France, also those in possession Canadian troops England, for other purposes connected with war. They would be glad if steps could be taken stop any more Ross rifles being brought to England, it being understood they thereby make themselves responsible for supplying necessary rifles to Canadian troops on arrival here, and they see no reason to doubt being able do this. Army Council add should Canadian Government be desirous undertaking manufacture rifle of different pattern suitable for use during present war, in their opinion rifle made same pattern as now produced in United States for British Army, which is on lines Lee-Enfield Mark III, embodying improvements, probably best one to adopt. Mailing copies correspondence. War Office wishes this matter regarded as secret until July 15.

PERLEY.

19 VICTORIA STREET, LONDON, S.W., July 5, 1916.

DEAR SIR ROBERT BORDEN,—I beg to confirm my cablegram of to-day, reading as follows:—

“Your cable twenty-fourth ultimo. Have communication from War Office covering letters recently received from Commander in Chief armies in France who reports efficiency Ross rifle thoroughly tested by actual fighting in field, that he has again consulted General Officer Commanding Second Army in case fresh points have come to light during recent heavy fighting by Canadians near Ypres. Latter states his experience working Ross rifle during last fight has only confirmed his opinion that Canadians in Third Division have lost confidence in their rifle and he recommends that rifles this division be exchanged. Sir Douglas Haig remarks that although reports from Second Division not to



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same effect he is of opinion Lee-Enfield rifle should be issued to all three divisions Canadian Corps. Army Council agree with this opinion and have approved his proposal to exchange rifles Second and Third Canadian Divisions for Lee-Enfield pattern and steps will be taken forthwith effect exchange. Army Council hope be able utilize Ross rifles released from France, also those in possession Canadian troops England for other purposes connected with war. They would be glad if steps could be taken stop any more Ross rifles being brought to England, it being understood they thereby make themselves responsible for supplying necessary rifles to Canadian troops on arrival here and they see no reason to doubt being able do this. Army Council add should Canadian Government be desirous undertaking manufacture rifle of different pattern suitable for use during present war in their opinion rifle made same pattern as now produced in United States for British Army which is on lines Lee-Enfield, Mark Three, embodying improvements probably best one to adopt. Mailing copies correspondence. War Office wishes this matter regarded as secret until July fifteenth."

I now think it well to send you, for your information, copy of a letter, which I addressed to General Sir W. R. Robertson, the Chief of the General Staff, on the 26th ultimo, in which I pressed to be provided with official documents and papers, on which any action taken by the Army Council was based, that could be made public. As the result I received an official letter from the War Office, dated the 3rd instant, covering certain documents as specified therein. Copies of the whole of these are attached hereto.

You will observe that the War Office communication is marked "Secret," which defeated the object in view. However, I took this matter up personally with General Von Donop, Master General of the Ordnance, and was informed that it was necessary that the documents should be treated as secret for at least a limited period. In their view the restriction on publication should extend until the 31st July, but on my pressing for some curtailment they agreed to this restriction being reduced to the 15th instant, and I therefore included this proviso in my cablegram to you.

Yours very truly,

GEORGE H. PERLEY.

19 VICTORIA STREET, LONDON,

June 26, 1916.

DEAR SIR WILLIAM ROBERTSON,—With reference to the cablegram sent to you on June 6th by Sir Robert Borden, through the Governor General of Canada and the Secretary of State for the Colonies, regarding which I had the pleasure of a conversation with you, a few days afterwards, I understand that you have in the meantime been having the question of the Ross rifle carefully considered in order to arrive at a decision as to whether our troops at the front should be re-armed with the Lee-Enfield. I hope that before deciding this important question you may arrange to have a thorough test made of both rifles under service conditions so that a definite report regarding them may be available as requested by Sir Robert Borden.

This would seem to be the most satisfactory way, but at the same time Sir Robert Borden has authorized me to inform you that the Government of Canada is prepared to leave the question of re-arming the Canadian troops entirely to the judgment of the War Office, and if they decide that no further tests are necessary or advisable it is prepared to accept and support their judgment. While, however, the Canadian Government will so support you during this time of war we feel that the War Office



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have and must accept full responsibility for any action they may take, and particularly for any decision that a further test is not wise or necessary.

As this is a question of the utmost importance to Canada, we would ask you to provide us with the official documents and papers on which any action you may take is based, and which we can make public. I have seen General von Donop several times on this subject, and understand that the War Office have been in communication regarding it with Sir Douglas Haig, Commander-in-Chief in France. All such correspondence should be made available for our use, and we should be provided with as full a statement of the facts as possible.

As you know, the Ross rifle is the only one which we can produce in Canada at present, and if our troops at the front should be re-armed with the Lee-Enfield such a decision would naturally raise the question as to whether Canada ought to continue manufacturing the Ross rifle, and if not what alternative practical plan could be suggested. I think it is very necessary that the War Office in considering the whole question should remember this situation and advise the Canadian Government what action in their opinion should be taken regarding a future supply. In Canada any large orders for rifles have to be given a long way ahead and it usually requires nearly a year's notice before the commencement of delivery for the purpose of enabling the company to secure the necessary materials of various kinds for which there is of course a great demand at present. During the last six months the Canadian Government had had under consideration the giving of a further order for a large number of rifles to be delivered in 1917, but this has been delayed on account of the rumoured dissatisfaction with the Ross rifle, referred to in the Prime Minister's cablegram to you of June 6. The time has now, however, arrived when an immediate decision must be made and the Canadian Government hopes that the War Office will have a thorough and reliable report regarding the merits of the rifles, on which such decision could be based. If the Ross rifle is really not the best for active service work, or if our troops have lost confidence in its efficiency, we would certainly not keep on manufacturing it. I ask, therefore, that the War Office advise us fully and give us their opinion regarding this.

Sincerely yours,

GEORGE H. PERLEY.

*Secret.*

WAR OFFICE,

LONDON, S.W., July 3, 1916.

The HIGH COMMISSIONER

For the Dominion of Canada,

17 Victoria Street, S.W.

SIR,—I am commanded by the Army Council to forward for the information of the Canadian Government, copies of two letters dated 28th May, 1916, 21st June, 1916, recently received from the General Officer Commanding in Chief, the armies in France, on the subject of the Ross rifle, the second of these letters being in response to a War Office letter, forwarding to General Headquarters, France, a copy of the secret telegram dated 7th June, 1916, from the Governor General of Canada to the Secretary of State for the Colonies.

It will be remembered that in June, 1915, Sir John French reported that he had ordered the re-arming of the Canadian Infantry owing to the two facts:—

(1) That the Ross rifle could not be relied upon to work smoothly with the ammunition then available.

(2) The want of confidence in the Ross rifle which a large number of the



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Canadian Infantry felt as evidenced by the fact that 3,000 of them had re-armed themselves with Lee-Enfield rifles taken from casualties on the battlefield.

(A copy of this report is attached marked "G.")

Subsequent to this an alteration was made to the rifles in existence and those under manufacture by which it was hoped to get over the defect mentioned at (1).

In view of the opinion now expressed by Sir Douglas Haig, the Army Council agree with him that the efficiency of the Ross rifle has been fully tested in the field and they have, after due consideration, approved his proposal to exchange the rifles of the 2nd and 3rd Canadian Divisions for the Lee-Enfield pattern, and steps will be taken forthwith to carry out the exchange.

I am to say that in the circumstances the Army Council hope to be able to utilize the Ross rifles released by the troops in France, and also those now in possession of the Canadian troops in England, for other purposes connected with the war, but they would be glad if steps could be taken to stop any more rifles of this pattern being brought to England, it being understood that the Army Council would thereby make themselves responsible for supplying the necessary rifles to the troops from Canada on arrival in England, and they see no reason to doubt their being able to do this.

I am commanded to add in response to the request contained in Sir George Perley's letter of the 26th inst. to Sir William Robertson that, should the Canadian Government be desirous of undertaking the manufacture of a rifle of a different pattern than the Ross, and suitable for use during the present war, and wish for the Army Council's opinion on this subject, it is thought that a rifle made to the same pattern as that now being produced in America for the British Army would probably be the best one to adopt. This rifle is on the lines of the Lee-Enfield Mark III, but has had embodied in it many improvements which have been arrived at in connection with a new pattern rifle which the Army Council were about to adopt just before the outbreak of war.

I am, sir, your obedient servant,

B. B. CUBITT.

*Secret.*

GENERAL HEADQUARTERS,

BRITISH ARMY IN THE FIELD, May 28, 1916.

The SECRETARY,

War Office,

London, S.W.

SIR,—I have the honour to inform you that I have satisfied myself, after extensive inquiries carried out throughout the Canadian corps, that, as a service rifle, the Ross is less trustworthy than the Lee-Enfield, and that the majority of the men armed with the Ross rifle have not the confidence in it that it is so essential they should possess. The inquiry on which these conclusions are based was the outcome of an urgent application from a battalion of the 3rd Canadian Division for re-armament with the short Lee-Enfield rifle, in consequence of a high percentage of jams experienced with their Ross rifles during a hostile attack on the 1st May, 1916.

2. I am accordingly of opinion that the 2nd and 3rd Canadian Divisions should be re-armed with the short Lee-Enfield rifle. It will be remembered that the 1st Canadian Division was so re-armed on 12th June, 1915.



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3. I am not in a position to effect this with the means at my disposal in France. I have the honour to inquire, therefore, whether the necessary number of rifles can be supplied from home sources, without interfering with, or delaying, the arrival and arming of the divisions due from England and Egypt on which I am relying.

I have the honour to be, sir,

Your obedient servant,

D. HAIG, General,  
*Commanding-in-Chief,*  
*British Armies in France.*

*Secret.*

Q.O.S. /141/2/A.

*From the General Officer Commanding-in-Chief,*  
*British Armies in France.*

*To the Secretary,*  
*War Office, London, S.W.*

GENERAL HEADQUARTERS, June 21, 1916.

SIR,—In reply to your No. 77/15/5307 (M.G.O.) of 10th June, 1916, forwarding a copy of a telegram dated June 7, from the Governor General of Canada, I have the honour to inform you that the efficiency of the Ross rifle has been thoroughly tested by actual fighting in the field, and the application conveyed in my O.B./174 of May 28, 1916, was made after very careful consideration of all the evidence available.

2. I have again consulted the General Officer Commanding Second Army in case any fresh points have come to light during the recent heavy fighting by the Canadians near Ypres. He tells me that his experience of the working of the Ross rifle during the last fight has only confirmed him in his opinion that the Canadians, in the 3rd Division at all events, have lost confidence in their rifle, and he recommends that the rifles in this division be exchanged.

3. Although the reports from the 2nd Division are not to the same effect, I am of opinion that the Lee-Enfield rifle should be issued to all three Divisions of the Canadian Corps.

I must therefore adhere to my recommendation that the 2nd and 3rd Canadian Divisions should be re-armed with the short Lee-Enfield rifle, and I would urge that the necessary steps to give effect thereto be taken without delay.

I have the honour to be, sir,

Your obedient servant,

D. HAIG, General,  
*Commanding-in-Chief,*  
*British Armies in France.*

WAR OFFICE, LONDON, S.W., June 10, 1916.

77/15/5307. (M.G.O.)

SIR,—I am commanded by the Army Council to forward herewith a copy of a telegram received from the Governor General of Canada, and to state that they would be glad to receive your opinion on the points raised in it, together with the results



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of any tests carried out in France. The Army Council would like to be informed whether you consider the tests already carried out sufficient and if not, they would ask that further tests should at once be made in order that there may be no delay in dealing with the question.

I am, sir, your obedient servant,

The GENERAL OFFICER,  
Commanding in Chief,  
British Armies in France.

*Secret.*

*Paraphrase telegram from the Governor General of Canada to the Secretary of State for the Colonies. (Received Colonial Office 6 a.m., 7th June, 1916.)*

*Secret.* June 6. Following from Prime Minister for Chief of General Staff, War Office. *Begins:* On account of rumoured dissatisfaction with Ross rifle I held a consultation on May 15 with General Hughes and sent unofficial message to Commander in Chief saying that we were prepared to leave the matter to his judgment after making all necessary tests of both rifles under such conditions as are experienced at the front. We suggested that the men carrying out the test should be of equal experience. The Ross rifle is the only arm we are at present equipped to produce in Canada, and we believe it to be efficient if properly handled, but are content to abide by the Commander in Chief's judgment after thorough investigation and adequate tests. We realize the absolute necessity of two conditions, viz.: (1) that our men shall be armed with thoroughly efficient rifles, and (2) that their confidence in such rifles shall be unshaken. Please favour me with your judgment as to the proper course of action to take.

ARTHUR.

O.S./141/2.

*Confidential.*

*From the Field Marshal, Commanding in Chief,  
British Army in the Field.*

*To the Secretary,  
War Office, London, S.W.*

GENERAL HEADQUARTERS, June 19, 1915.

SIR,—I have the honour to acknowledge receipt of War Office letter No. 77/15/5209 (A.5), dated 16.6.1915, regarding the action taken by me in the matter of the Ross rifles of the Canadian Division.

2. The circumstances are as follows:—

I had heard rumours that there was a growing want of confidence in this rifle, as evidenced by the fact that the infantry of the Canadian Division were taking every opportunity of exchanging their rifles with those of the Lee-Enfield pattern from casualties on the battlefield.

3. To satisfy myself whether there was any real justification for this state of affairs, without at the same time lending encouragement to the idea that the Ross rifle was unsatisfactory, such as might have resulted from an investigation by the divisional authorities, I gave instructions for the assembly of a small committee at my General Headquarters to test the rifle with the various natures of ammunition in use, including ammunition of Canadian manufacture, of which a small supply was obtained from England for the purpose, none having been sent out to this country for use with the rifle.



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4. The proceedings of this committee were laid before me on the eve of a serious offensive operation in which the Canadian Division was to take part, and I was at the same time informed that over 3,000, or more than one-third, of the infantry of this division had already succeeded in rearming themselves with the Lee-Enfield rifle without any authority having been given for them to do so.

Looking:

(1) to the unanimous opinion of my committee that the Ross rifle could not be relied upon to work smoothly and efficiently in rapid fire with any ammunition other than that of Canadian manufacture;

(2) to the fact that no ammunition of this nature was available in this country, and that sufficient supplies could not be obtained from England; and

(3) to the want of confidence in the rifle which a large number of the infantry evidently felt, as evidenced by the fact that over 3,000 had, without authority, exchanged their rifles for those used by their British comrades, and taken from casualties on the battlefield;

I did not feel justified in sending this division into battle with the Ross rifle, and ordered the re-arming of the infantry of the division with the Lee-Enfield rifle, which was carried out before they went into action on 15th instant.

5. As regards the suggestion made by the Army Council that the opinion of one or two selected Canadian officers should be obtained, I submit that this is a difficult and complicated question which can only be satisfactorily settled by the best expert opinion, and that the views of a few selected Canadian officers, who may or may not be prejudiced in the matter, will not be of any material assistance.

6. I would, therefore, suggest that the Army Council should send to this country one or more of the most highly qualified experts obtainable to make the necessary tests under service conditions, and report whether ammunition of British manufacture is or is not suitable for use with the Ross rifle. For this purpose a supply of ammunition of Canadian manufacture should be brought out for comparison.

The Army Council can then decide whether, looking to all the circumstances, it is advisable to restore the Ross rifle to the Canadian Division.

7. In conclusion, I would observe that in my reports I have never condemned the Ross rifle, nor have I any sufficient data to justify me in doing so.

I have expressed and acted on my opinion that, so far as I can judge, the ammunition of British manufacture is not suitable for use with Ross rifle, and that there is a large and growing feeling of want of confidence in their rifle on the part of the men in the Canadian Division, which is amply justified by the report of the committee.

8. Owing to the difficulty at present experienced in turning out rifles in sufficient numbers for our requirements, I shall most heartily welcome an authoritative statement which will carry conviction to the men that their apprehensions are unfounded, or what may possibly be found more easy of attainment, viz., a slight alteration to the chamber of the rifle which will better adapt it for use with our British ammunition.

I have the honour to be, sir,

Your obedient servant,

J. D. P. FRENCH.

*Paraphrase of cypher telegram, Mr. Bonar Law to the Governor General.*

LONDON, July 11, 1916.

With reference to my telegram June 10. Report from General Officer Commanding in Chief in France has now been received by Army Council recommending



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that Second and Third Canadian Divisions should be re-armed with short Lee-Enfield rifles, and Army Council have approved this. They hope to be able to utilize Ross rifles released and also those now in possession of Canadian troops in England for other purposes connected with the war, but ask that no more Ross rifles should be brought to England. Army Council will be responsible for supplying necessary rifles to Canadian troops on arrival in England. If your Government desire to undertake manufacture of different rifles suitable for use during war, Army Council think that rifles now being produced in America for British Army on lines of Lee-Enfield Mark III but with improvements would be best.

Despatch follows mail.

No objection to publication of all the above information after 15th July.

BONAR LAW.

LONDON, July 11, 1916.

Sir ROBERT BORDEN,  
Ottawa.

I am authorized by Secretary of War to inform you as follows: Quote. "Since outbreak of war improved type of Lee-Enfield Rifle has been adopted and manufactured under orders of the British Government. With a view to uniformity the Lee-Enfield Rifle has been offered to Canadian Government for Canadian troops at the front. It is expected that negotiations will be carried on in immediate future between British Government and Governments of Dominions with a view to securing for all His Majesty's forces throughout the Empire a uniform type of service rifle. Doubtless all existing facilities for production of rifle in Overseas Dominions will be utilized for manufacture of new service rifle when adopted."

AITKEN.

OTTAWA, July 17, 1916.

DEAR SIR GEORGE PERLEY,—I beg to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 5th instant, respecting the Ross rifle.

Yours faithfully,

Sir GEORGE PERLEY, K.C.M.G.,  
Ottawa, Canada.

*Confidential (6)*

DOWNING STREET, July 12, 1916.

SIR,—With reference to my telegram of the 11th instant, I have the honour to transmit to Your Royal Highness, to be laid before your Ministers copies of letters which have passed between the War Office, the High Commissioner for Canada, and the General Officer Commanding in Chief, British Armies in France, on the subject of the Ross rifle.

2. The Army Council state that there would be no objection to the publication of the correspondence after the 15th instant.

I have the honour to be, sir,

Your Royal Highness' most obedient humble servant,

A. BONAR LAW.

GOVERNOR GENERAL,

His Royal Highness

The DUKE OF CONNAUGHT AND OF STRATHEARN, K.C.,

K.T., K.P., etc., etc., etc.



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For despatch from the Field Marshal Commanding in Chief, British Army in the Field, to the War Office, dated June 19, 1915, see page 9.

For letter from General Haig, dated May 28, 1916, see page 7.

For War Office letter dated June 10, 1916, see page 8.

For paraphrase telegram from the Governor-General of Canada to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, see page 9.

For despatch from the General Officer commanding in Chief, British Armies in France, to the War Office, dated June 21, 1916, see page 8.

For letter from War Office, dated July 3, see page 6.

*From Governor General to Colonial Secretary.*

OTTAWA, August 30, (31), 1916.

*Secret.* In pursuance of your cable message of July eleventh my advisers announced that Canadian troops at front would in future be armed with Lee-Enfield rifles. They are confident that no departure from this decision has been made without their knowledge but they desire to be informed as to report which has reached them that Fourth Canadian Division was armed with Ross rifle when recently despatched to France.

*Paraphrase of cypher telegram, Mr. Bonar Law to Governor General.*

LONDON, September 7, 1916.

Your telegram August 31st: Fourth Division were sent to France armed with Ross rifles but Lee-Enfield have since been sent to France for purpose of re-arming. Re-arming should be completely performed by now.

BONAR LAW.